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SUBJECT: UNSC HEARS THAT GUINEA-BISSAU PROGRESS IS FRAGILE

[11](#). (SBU) SUMMARY. The Secretary-General's representative, Shola Omoregie, told the Security Council on October 3 that the evident calm in Guinea-Bissau is deceptive. Political, security, and social tensions are rising beneath the surface and will likely rise further in the run-up to elections. Omoregie praised the efforts of the Guinea-Bissau Government to reform the security sector, combat narcotics trafficking, and control spending and argued that continued progress would require continued assistance, especially financial assistance, of bilateral donors, international financial institutions, as well as coordination of efforts, possibly through the Peace Building Commission. All members expressing an opinion endorsed in principle a Council referral of Guinea-Bissau to the Peace Building Commission; the U.S. and UK suggested that the Council should develop clear criteria for such referrals. END SUMMARY.

[12](#). (SBU) In closed consultations on October 3, SYG Representative Shola Omoregie, chief of the UN Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS), told Security Council members that the Government of Guinea-Bissau has continued to impress him with sustained efforts to address the country's many problems. He praised particularly the government's demonstration of relative fiscal restraint and its development of a security sector reform plan of action.

[13](#). (SBU) Omoregie made clear, however, that progress in Guinea-Bissau has been limited and is not yet self-sustaining. He said payment of public sector salaries is chronically problematic and arrearages regularly threaten social order. In response to a question from the South African PermRep, he acknowledged that Guinea-Bissau has far too many generals in its active-duty army but sympathized that "they cannot retire because they have no pensions and no assurance of gainful employment." Omoregie described the legislative elections, expected next spring, as both an opportunity and a risk in that democracy could be deepened but violence is also a distinct possibility as divisions are exposed.

[14](#). (SBU) Omoregie also flagged narcotics trafficking as an overarching concern and one against which the government is potentially overmatched from a resource perspective. Although he praised the government for ratifying the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, he described a reality that has planes arriving with regularity in the coastal archipelago from South America with illicit cargos of such value that the planes themselves are expendable.

[15](#). (SBU) Several members urged a holistic approach to dealing with Guinea-Bissau's many problems and, in this regard, endorsed Prime Minister N'Dafa Cabi's request that Guinea-Bissau be placed on the Peace Building Commission's

agenda. South Africa, Congo, China, and Ghana expressly endorsed the referral. No member spoke in opposition. Ambassador Wolcott said that the USG supports such a referral in principle and, seconded by the UK, she suggested that the Council should at the same time develop comprehensive criteria for such referrals.

¶6. (SBU) Ambassador Wolcott also asked Omoregie whether the Government of Guinea-Bissau appreciated the extent to which a Peace Building Commission presence would insist on access to every aspect of the nation's governance as the price of PBC interest. Omoregie replied that he has several times personally explained the consequences of a PBC presence to both the prime minister and the foreign minister, adding that "the patient has no choice but to agree to the surgery out of desperation."
KHALILZAD